

HIS WORST NIGHTMARE REALIZED

by Rabbi Label Lam

Then Haman said to Achashveiros, "There is one (Echod) nation scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom. (Esther 3:8)

Rava said, "There was no one who knew how to slander like Haman. (Tractate Megilla 13B)

Who is like Your people Israel, one nation (Goy Echod) in the world...? (Shmuel II 7:23)

Haman had an agenda. He needed to downplay the value of the Jewish People to the function of the kingdom. The Talmud tells us that he was making the case that since they are scattered about there would be no bald spot or power vacuum created by their sudden disappearance. The Talmud crowns Haman as the king of slander. His is the art of distorting truth not manufacturing it. Therefore, much of what he said was absolutely true. The Sefas Emes points out that there is praise embedded within his words. We are in fact a "one-nation" even though we are spread throughout the world. So what's the big compliment?

It had been many years since I was at the Western Wall. I approached with awe on the eve of Shabbos. I stood silently from a distance unable to move or speak. People were beginning to gather for the onset of the holiest of days at this holiest of places. A short distance from where I stood a loud voice began to lure my attention. There stood a young man in short sleeves, holding a paper yarmulke on his head with one hand and pointing with the other. With his mid-western twang he was asking a companion in a slightly mocking and boisterous tone. "Look at those! Look at that one!" I found myself backing into his conversation. I introduced myself. He felt comfortable enough to share with me his curiosity. He pointed out all the various styles of hair and dress on display. "Who are all these different sects? Why are these ones wearing white hats, and these black, and these with their hair flying this way and that? I asked him where he was from and he told me that he was visiting from Chicago. I inquired about the origin of his family and when they had settled in Chicago. When I asked him how he knew to come here, he gave me a look of incredulity as if to say, "Who doesn't know that?"

I told him, "I'm from New York and although his grandparents and mine came from the same part of the world at about the same time because they settled in different parts of the country look how much we differ in dress and accent. This is only after a few generations. When looking at the variety of dress and hair styles and all the many approaches to prayer on display here today consider that we all broke up from here 2000 years ago. 2000 years later, with no central authority, at the end of a

long- suffering exile, we are returning from the four corners of the earth and everybody has the same address in their back pocket. Sure there are subtle nuances of varying customs and costumes but the substance of our existence is exactly the same: The same Torah, the same Shabbos, and the same G-d. Suddenly those surface differences seem insignificant in comparison to our shared history and destiny, and all the sophisticated coordination that that requires."

Haman was able to perceive a unique quality about the Jewish People, something that we may all too often fail to notice about ourselves. Why was this evil genius so able to detect our essential oneness? 1) Often a stranger can see a mile (A ma'alah). 2) As an enemy he was a student of our strengths. And our re-unification as a nation was only his worst nightmare realized. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and Torah.org.